

**TESTIMONY OF
RHONDA BOISVERT, PRESIDENT, CT ASSOCIATION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES**

***IN OPPOSITION TO*
SECTION 11 OF HB 5052 – AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNORS BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Human Services Committee Public Hearing, February 20, 2014

Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Rhonda Boisvert. I am President of the Connecticut Association of Residential Care Homes (CARCH) and co-owner of Pleasant View Manor in Watertown, Ct. and Shailerville Manor in Haddam, Ct. I am here to testify in opposition to Section 11 of House Bill 5052.

Residential Care Homes (RCHs) provide cost-effective care and support services to elderly and mentally disabled individuals in Connecticut- some of the most vulnerable people in the state. The average per day payment by the Department of Social Services is approximately \$91.00 per day for individuals eligible for the Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled (AABD) program which supplements Social Security Disability or Old Age benefits. RCH services include residential, dietary and personal care. We provide a home like atmosphere for our residents including dietary and personal care.

Section 11 of HB 5052 is especially troubling as it removes several longstanding rate-setting provisions that are important to RCHs. The proposed revisions include:

- 1) Removal of a minimum rent/property reimbursement allowance of \$3.10 per day or \$94.29 per month. The reimbursement floor of \$94.29 per month is far below any reasonable room rent amount. Instead of deleting this provision, CARCH strongly believes that a significant increase to the minimum property allowance is warranted.
- 2) Elimination of 85% minimum occupancy standard for homes with 25 or fewer licensed beds which would subject smaller homes to the 90% standard that applies to large facilities. The current 85% standard protects smaller homes from rate reductions due to minor occupancy drops that occur from time to time. Minimum occupancy standards in other states are often below 90%.
- 3) Termination of the base or minimum salary for a RCH Administrator of \$48,546. This level of compensation is very reasonable when considering the scope of responsibility of the RCH manager.
- 4) Discontinuation of the allowance of up to 8 hours of overtime per week for employees related to an owner. This overtime allowance was added by the legislature in recognition that relatives of owners are often relied upon to work shifts on short notice.

All of the deletions included in Section 11 of Bill Number 5052 were previously deemed appropriate and adopted by the General Assembly. It is important to point out that we are not opposed to changes to current rate-setting. In fact, we would welcome a full review of the current formula; however, we do not believe that the proposed revisions serve the interests of the State of Connecticut, our many residents or RCH employees and administrators.

The RCH industry has been struggling for years with capped rates. Many homes are entering our fourth year of having frozen rates. The financial burden on RCHs has been so critical that RCH owners are using credit cards and taking out personal loans to cover everyday costs. Administrators work for a very modest salary and many employees have not had a raise in years. Most homes have residents with behavioral issues and mental health diagnoses. We ask that you uncap our rates and not move forward with Section 11 of House Bill 5052.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rhonda Boisvert – President of the Ct. Association of Residential Care Homes